

March 4, 2007

EXHIBIT 24
DATE 3/12/07
SB 152

Dear Mr. Jore and members of House Education Committee,

I am writing this letter opposing full day kindergarten.

I speak from experience. I have taught 1/2 day kindergarten sessions for 8 years, and I am the mother of 3 children who have attended a rural school that offers full day kindergarten Tuesdays, Thursdays, and every other Friday. I have witnessed the toll full day kindergarten has taken on my children. I am blessed to have bright, eager, well prepared children. Even with all of these advantages, my children came home exhausted, stressed, and crabby. Even though they were older entering kindergarten they still required naps and playtime. One of my children even fell asleep in the school library on a number of occasions in the afternoon. This is what they experienced 2 or 3 days a week. I would be horrified and saddened to put my kids through this 5 days a week.

I feel that as a society we are pressuring our children too soon. We do not ask our children to walk, talk, etc. before they are developmentally ready. Why do we insist on doing it academically? Montana school scores have been consistently high compared to the rest of the nation, so what is the point of fixing something that isn't broken. Our youngest learners need to be introduced to school in a joyful, stress free environment as opposed to a rigid, long, academically intense full day.

I can't help but keep asking myself, ARE WE THINKING OF OUR CHILDREN? Is this an effort to provide free baby-sitting for parents, gain more federal funding for school districts, appease the teacher's union, or to just jump on the national bandwagon?

Words cannot accurately convey how deeply opposed I am to this concept. It goes against every instinct I have as a mother and every educational belief I have as a teacher.

Please put our children first.

Jonette Balsam Doeden
Miles City Walmart Teacher of the Year 2004-2005
Title 1 Teacher 2006-2007

March 4, 2007

Dear Mr. Jore and members of House Education Committee,

We are two teachers with a total of 40 years of teaching between us. Both of us have taught 1/2 day kindergarten classes for a total of 15 years. We both strongly oppose full day kindergarten. We feel that children should be allowed to be children and should not be rushed into the school experience. 1/2 day kindergarten allows them a gradual introduction into school and is a place to introduce routines, social skills, fun, and a joy of learning. Pushing them academically before they are ready robs them of some of the essential joys of childhood.

Aside from the emotional drawbacks of full day kindergarten there is also the question of funding. Here in Miles City funding would be required for 3 more full time teachers, 3 more fully equipped kindergarten classrooms, and creation of a full day kindergarten curriculum. With funding already tight where will this money come from, and is this the most beneficial use of this funding.

Once again we would like to emphasize our total opposition to full day kindergarten. Please share this email with the other members of the committee.

Yours in opposition,
Sandy Krpoun and Jonette Balsam Doeden